



Northwest Florida State College      Spring 2016

## Business and Administrative Communication    GEB 3213    20236

**3 Credit Hours**

### Course Policies and Syllabus

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**Instructor:** Dr. Deborah Nester, Department of English

**Instructor Contact:** Building E/420, Room 132  
(850) 729-6443    [nesterd@nwfsc.edu](mailto:nesterd@nwfsc.edu)

Website: <http://faculty.nwfsc.edu/comm/nesterd/>

**Office Hours:** Monday 8:00 am – 10:30 am  
Tuesday 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm  
Wednesday 8:00 am – 10:30 am; 2:00 – 4:00  
Thursday 9:00 am – 10:30 am

Or By Appointment

### Course Description

This course addresses effective communication in the business world. Topics include business communication trends and issues, selecting appropriate methods of communication, managing communication in a crisis, composition of standard business documents, and preparation of proposals. Assignments include independent writings, case study analysis, contributions to peer discussions, and teamwork/role-playing activities. Technology in business communications is a major focus of the course.

The official course description is:

A comprehensive course in effective and efficient communications in the business world; includes preparation of reports, proposals and presentations, technical writing skills, composition of standard business documents including persuasive messages, sales letters, customer service correspondence, instructional memoranda, and policy and procedure development. 3 credit hours.

### Course Prerequisite

Upper division standing and ENC1101 or departmental permission.

## Course Goals and Objectives/Learning Outcomes

1. Students will gain a broad understanding of business/professional communications and be able to demonstrate the following:
  - Identify the purpose of written and verbal communications
  - Assess and “speak to” specific audiences, both orally and in writing
  - Organize and present business-related information orally and in writing
  - Understand the decision-making process and the impact it has on oral and written communications
  - Select and use appropriate wording
  - Understand the concept of readability and its relevance to professional communications.
2. Students will gain an understanding of various methods of professional communications and be able to demonstrate the following:
  - Write business-related messages that are clear, precise, and concise.
  - Understand the dynamics of one-on-one and group meetings
  - Give a clearer, complete, and comprehensive oral presentation.

## Required Materials

*Business Communication Essentials: A Skills-Based Approach*, Courtland Bovée and John Thill  
6<sup>th</sup> edition, Pearson, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-13-297132-4

## Important Dates

Classes Begin January 11

Last Day to Withdraw with a “W” or change to “Audit” March 30

Student Holidays Monday, January 18 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
Wednesday, March 21 – March 27 – Spring Break

Last Day of Classes Monday, May 2

## Meeting Dates

One segment of this course meets on only on scheduled dates and is structured in a traditional lecture/discussion/activity format. The remainder of the course is conducted as independent, online study.

Because we meet so few times, attendance is critical. If you miss more than two class sessions you are advised to meet with me, as your absences will begin to significantly impact your course grade.

The design of this course is hybrid, which means that you will be working independently, with your classmates through electronic communications (the D2L site), and in the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Full participation in all segments is necessary for your success in the course.

What we do in the class meetings builds on the material you cover on your own, so it is critical that you complete all work as assigned. In order to gain from the class session and contribute to the learning of others, you must have an understanding of the foundational concepts that are keyed to the class activity. If the assignment is reading, be sure that you have not only read the material, but that you have read it thoughtfully and have made notes of your thoughts and ideas.

Note that class participation is a component of your overall grade, and you are expected to contribute to discussions.

### Class Attendance

Students who stop attending class or are not able to pass the course due to attendance expectations stated in the syllabus may receive a failing grade of "FA." An "FA" grade is a failing grade in GPA calculations and may impact the receipt of federal aid in subsequent courses. Students traveling for college approved activities will not be penalized academically but will be responsible for missed work.

This course involves frequent class discussions and group work. You will neither benefit from these activities nor contribute to the class as a whole if you are frequently absent. Therefore, missed classes may result in a penalty in the participation element of the final course grade.

### Weighted Grade Values

Grade Component	Policy on Late Work	Points Toward Final Grade *
<b>Class Participation:</b> A significant portion of each class session will include interactive discussion/activities related to the readings and the completed Written Assignments. Discussion posts in D2L are included in this course component.	These activities cannot be made up if you are absent or unprepared.	200
<b>Written Assignments:</b> News postings on the D2L site will fully explain the individual assignments.	Assignments must be submitted by the dates specified. One Writing Assignment (excluding the Major Project) can be submitted up to one week late. At the time the assignment is due, it is the responsibility of the student to submit a notice of intent to submit late. If no notice is submitted on time, the assignment will not qualify for the extension.	300
<b>Quizzes/Exercises:</b> Quizzes may be given with or without advance notice, and will be based on assigned readings.	In-class quizzes/exercises cannot be made up.  The lowest quiz/exercise grade (which could be a missed quiz or exercise) will be dropped.	100
<b>Major Project:</b> You will complete a major project demonstrating	Major projects submitted late cannot be accepted.	300

your mastery of the course objectives.		
<b>Final Exam:</b> You are required to sit for a final exam at the end of the course. (Details TBA)	Following College and department policies, and in order to maintain fair practices for all students, there is almost no circumstance that would position you to take the exam early.	100
		* Point values may be adjusted, if necessary.

**The grading scale is as follows:**

A = 90-100%  
 B = 80-89%  
 C = 70-79%  
 D = 60-69%  
 F = 59% and below

**Incomplete Grades**

At the discretion of the instructor, an incomplete grade (“I”) may be awarded when the student is unable to finish the required work because of unforeseen extenuating circumstances such as illness or TDY assignment. To receive an “I” grade, the student must have successfully completed a significant portion of the required coursework and be able to finish the remaining work without attending class. An “I” grade will automatically convert to a grade of “F” if the student does not complete the remainder of the coursework by the established deadline.

**General Course Policies**

- Assignments must be submitted on time. Failure to complete an appropriate amount of course work and/or failure to attend the scheduled in-class sessions may result in your inability to receive a passing grade for the course.
- As traditional in-class meetings for this course are limited, attendance is expected at all such sessions. As a courtesy to the instructor and to others in the class, students should arrive on time. If you miss more than two class meetings, your final grade may be penalized one letter grade for each additional absence. This is not a measure intended to be punitive, but rather reflects the learning that takes place during the class meetings—experiences that cannot be replicated in any other forum.
- All work must be typed, and you should adhere to **APA format** for all page layout and documentation.

Good sources of information on APA style are:

APA’s website (limited but definitive information) <http://www.apastyle.org/>

Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

I particularly direct you to the sample APA paper:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/18/>

NWFSC's library (LRC) links to APA information: <http://lrc.nwfsc.edu/citinghelp.cfm>

- There are no make-up assignments. Only one late assignment is allowed, and that must be submitted within a week of the due date.

The final course project must be submitted on the due date; no late submission will be accepted.

- All work must be the original and independent work of the student (except for assignments that are designed as team projects). Cheating or plagiarism of any form may result in a grade of "F" in the course or for an individual assignment.

Plagiarism is the full or partial presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own, including submitting a paper written by another person (with or without revision), copying passages from published works without crediting the source, or rewording published passages without giving proper credit.

You may not submit work that someone else has written for you. You may not submit work that you have paid someone to write. You may not submit work that you have purchased. You may not change a few words and phrases and submit work as your original thoughts or writing. You may not copy material from an Internet site even though it may not seem to be copyright-protected. If you use work created by someone else, simply give credit to that person/source (using proper documentation format), and you will be fine.

All work for this course must be generated for this course—you cannot "recycle" a paper from another course.

If you're unsure, particularly when you are asked to include outside resources in your writing, I will be glad to tell you how to deal with the material appropriately.

**(Note:** NWFSC subscribes to *Turnitin*, an online plagiarism detection and prevention service. By enrolling in this class, you are consenting to upload your papers to *Turnitin*, where they will be checked for plagiarism. Papers submitted to *Turnitin* are saved as source documents with the *Turnitin* database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in other papers.)

## D2L (Desire to Learn)

D2L is the learning management system used in NWFSC's web-supplemented courses. Features that we will use include the following:

- **News** page: Announcements, assignments, and reminders will be posted here.
- **Content** page: Assignments and other course content will be posted here.
- **Dropbox:** Assignments are submitted here.
- **Gradebook**
- **Quiz**
- **Locker** feature: Allows students to save and store work so that the material can be accessed from any computer, whether at school or at home.
- **Discussion Board:** Used for student-to-student as well as instructor-to-student interaction.

**Students** are responsible for posting assignments to D2L in a proper and timely manner. For assistance with D2L, please use the HELP functions in D2L. For additional assistance, go to the college's e-campus homepage at <http://ecampus.nwfsc.edu/> where more resources and contact numbers are available.

Difficulties with personal computers or Internet service providers do not constitute emergencies for this class and will not result in deadline extensions. Students experiencing these problems can use computers at any NWFSC campus or center to access the college website and submit assignments.

### **Cell Phone/Electronic Devices**

Unless advance approval is obtained from the instructor, cell phones and other electronic/wireless communication devices must be turned off during class times.

NWFSC policy states:

"Cell phones, pagers, and other such electronic devices must not distract from learning. Courtesy to the professor and other students requires that phones be on vibrate or silent mode during class. No student should initiate conversations, including texts, during class activities. Use of electronic communication devices during examinations or other graded activities may constitute grounds for disciplinary action; such devices must be completely out of sight during exams or other assessments. Where emergency or employment situations *require* access to electronic communication services, arrangements may be made *in advance* with the instructor."

To be perfectly honest, I do not find cell phones to be an issue in my classes. Texting, however, is a major problem. Under the header of "Here's a good way to insult your professor and decrease your chances for a strong class participation score," I remind you that texting in class (or studying for other classes, or sleeping, or chatting in the back of the room, or playing on your laptop) will have precisely that result. Such actions tell your professors that you have no interest in the class, and no respect for them—not a particularly good message to convey to the person who is giving you a grade for the course.

There are legitimate situations that fall within this general policy, however, and acceptable courses of action are available. If you have a crisis that must be dealt with by text or phone, it is courteous to let me know ahead of time if possible. Then simply step out of the room briefly to take care of it. (Certainly, I would not expect this to happen often.)

Laptops may be used to take notes at the discretion of the instructor; please request approval.

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### **Emergency College Closures**

In the event of unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the schedule, requirements, and procedures in this course are subject to change. If the college closes for inclement weather or other emergency, any exams, presentations, or assignments previously scheduled during the closure period will automatically be rescheduled for the first regular class meeting held once the college re-opens. If changes to graded activities are required, students will not be penalized as a result of the adjustments, but will be responsible for meeting revised deadlines and course requirements.

## **Children in the Classroom**

As a courtesy to other students and the learning process, students may not bring children with them to class sessions. Health and safety concerns prohibit children from accompanying adult students in any lab, shop, office, or classroom or other college facility where potential hazards exist. If a child-related emergency means you must miss class, contact the instructor as soon as possible to determine your options. (The full "Children on Campus" policy statement appears in the College Catalog.)

If you have such a situation, connect with me. Please know that I would understand your situation, and that I adore children. In my experience, however, having children in class tends to interfere with the learning environment (they are just too cute, and other students want to play with them), so I am unlikely to offer the option of bringing your child to class. I will try to help you work out a solution about missing the class session.

## **Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Academic Integrity**

Students are responsible for adherence to all college policies and procedures, including those related to academic freedom, cheating, classroom conduct, computer/network/e-mail use and other items included in the Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook. Students should be familiar with the rights and responsibilities detailed in the current Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty is a serious breach of student responsibilities and may trigger consequences which range from a failing grade to formal disciplinary action.

## **The College Environment**

The College catalogue states: "The college recognizes that a thoughtful and reasoned search for truth can be conducted only in an atmosphere free of intimidation and coercion. Students are expected to respect the rights and welfare of all members of the college and to exercise common sense, good taste, and applied reason when testing their knowledge. Students are free to take reasonable exception to data and views offered in the classroom and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for satisfying the requirements of any course for which they are enrolled. So long as it is consistent with the goals and established policies of the college, the instructor has final authority in all matters relating to course content, grading practices, and classroom procedures."

What does this mean? One part of the issue is that, at the college level, all students are expected to conduct themselves as adults, in their behavior and expression (written or verbal). I have no doubt that you know what is appropriate for a college classroom, but should you wonder, I am happy to guide you. The second part is that you are expected to accept that a range of viewpoints have legitimacy, and though you are not expected to change your own views, you are expected to participate in classes with openness toward the viewpoints of others.

## **Classroom Conduct**

Each student is expected to participate seriously and purposefully in this class. Students are expected to respect the opinions of others and the right to express them. Students must exercise common sense and good taste in the classroom. Students whose behavior is interfering with the conduct of the class will be asked to leave. Please see the current college catalog for further details.

## RESOURCES

**The Academic Success Center (ASC)** is located in the Activities Center on the Niceville Campus. The ASC provides free learning support services such as tutoring, ESOL, and writing assistance for all NWFSC students. Individual and group tutoring is available in a wide range of subjects on a walk-in-basis and by appointment. For more information, call the Academic Success Center at (850) 729-5389 or visit our website at [Free Tutoring](#).

**Reading to Learn (R2L)** is a project of Northwest Florida State College designed to support students' learning through direct instruction of reading strategies. Students may access R2L at our website: [Reading to Learn](#).

**Math Labs** are located in the Math Building L, Room L-131, on the Niceville Campus and in Building 7, Room 702 on the Fort Walton Beach Campus and Room 131 at the Crestview Center. The math labs are open to all students and provide free walk-in tutoring for all mathematics courses. For lab hours, students may call the Math Department at (850) 729-5377 or visit our website at [Math Lab](#).

**Smarthinking** is an online, real-time tutoring offered free to students, who may access this service via RaiderNet.

### Open Computer Labs

There are numerous open computer labs throughout the Northwest Florida State College campuses. Students may access our website for lab locations and hours: [Computer lab location and hours](#)

### Testing Center

Testing Centers administer college admissions tests, placement tests, proctored exams, ACT/SAT, GED, CLEP, and DSST (formerly known as DANTEs). General information concerning tests, hours

Testing Center hours may be accessed on the Testing Center website at [Testing Center](#). Makeup exams may be taken in the Testing Center, depending upon instructor policies on late work.

### Library, Online Reference Materials, and Resources

The library is a comprehensive, learning resource center providing information in print, digital, and multimedia formats to support the educational objectives of the College. In addition to in-house materials, online services and resources can be accessed through the LRC website. Library hours are posted each semester at the building entrance and on the LRC website at [Learning Resource Center](#)

### Assistance for Military and Veterans

Northwest Florida State College supports our military and veterans students. You may contact NWFSC Hurlburt Center Educational Services Building at 850-200-4190 or visit our website: [Support Our Military](#)

### Students with Disabilities

Northwest Florida State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If you have disabilities for which accommodations may be appropriate to assist you in this class, please

contact the Office of Disability Support Services on the Niceville Campus, or call 850-729-6079 (TDD 1-800-955-8771 or Voice 1-800-955-8770).

Please know that I am very happy to provide the accommodations that you need, and that I make every possible effort to maintain anonymity. Because I will not mention anything about this in class, even though the Office of Disability Support Services notifies me of your requirements, it is important that you connect with me so that I can understand how to best assist you.